

Mr. Chairman. Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon on HB 4138 which would create the Inclusive Home Design Act. This act would require 50% of newly constructed homes that receive MSHDA funding to have certain components that would allow for basic accessibility by those with disabilities. Additionally, this new act would also require that each applicant for MSHDA funding submit an assurance that they are compliant with this act. This act would take effect on all newly funded MSHDA construction starting after January 1, 2007.

This issue was brought to my attention by an organization in my district – the Disability Resource Center, as well as several other disability rights groups. According to an article in Fortune Magazine, the US Census reports that approximately 17% of the US population, or 50 million Americans, from age 5 and up are disabled. This statistic

brings up several issues, with accessibility at the forefront.

HB 4138 is a step in the right direction by requiring that half of taxpayer funded housing meets basic accessibility requirements, with little to no additional cost. This legislation would require a series of components be met, including one no-step entrance, specific measurements on the primary entrance and environmental controls, and specific requirements on the 1st floor bathroom so that it is wheelchair accessible.

Similar legislation has been adopted in other states including Arizona, Illinois, Kansas, Texas, and Vermont. Additionally, the city of Escanaba has adopted an ordinance to encourage accessible homebuilding by offering cash incentives.

There is a substitute, which is the result of several workgroup meetings that were held between MSHDA, CEDAM and the MACIL Housing Workgroup. It is a compromise that was reached with all parties. The main changes in the substitute involve reducing the requirements to 50% of newly constructed housing being compliant and altering the language so that it refers to type “B” dwellings as defined in the Michigan Building Code, as the requirements of type “B” dwellings are essentially the same requirements we were seeking in the initial bill.

All of you should have in front of you several letters of support and also a resolution from the US Conference of Governors supporting state initiatives to promote visitable housing. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to answer any additional questions.